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AUTHOR Land, Warren A.; Haney, Julia J.
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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted at a private junior college in northern Mississippi to assess alumni attitudes toward selected aspects of the college. Specifically, the study sought to determine the former students' primary reason for attending the college and their attitudes toward the philosophy and purposes of the college; their perception of opportunities provided by the college for positive personal growth; and their evaluation of college faculty, curriculum, and student activities. In addition, the study examined the relationship between selected personal characteristics and attitudes toward the college. Study findings, based on responses from 232 alumni to a mailed questionnaire, included the following: (1) the alumni exhibited positive attitudes toward the college's philosophy and purposes, approving most highly of the college's commitment to spiritual values; (2) for items concerned with personal growth, the college received the most positive ratings for giving students the opportunity to work and think independently and the most negative ratings on items related to consumer issues and financial management; (3) the highest ranked reasons for attending the college were location, opportunity to work while attending, low cost, and scholarships/financial aid; and (4) two personal characteristics that were found to be significantly related to positive attitudes toward the college were the year attended and transfer from another college. (AJL)

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ATTITUDES OF THE ALUMNI TOWARD SELECTED ASPECTS OF A PRIVATE JUNIOR COLLEGE

Warren A. Land
Julia J. Haney

Mississippi State University
Educational Media Center
Bureau of Educational Research and Evaluation
Mississippi State, Mississippi

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes of the alumni toward selected aspects of the college. The five specific objectives were as follows: (1) To determine the attitudes of the alumni toward the philosophy and purposes of the college, (2) To determine the attitudes of the alumni toward the opportunities provided by the college for positive personal growth, (3) To determine the attitudes of the alumni toward the college faculty, curriculum, and student activities, (4) To determine the primary reason indicated for attending the college, and (5) To determine which of the selected personal characteristics were associated with positive attitudes toward the college.

The subjects were alumni of a private Junior College in North Mississippi. The data were gathered through the use of a questionnaire designed specifically for this purpose. Of the questionnaires distributed, a total of 232 were returned in usable condition.

The alumni exhibited positive attitudes toward (1) philosophy and purposes, and (2) the faculty, curriculum, and student activities. They exhibited moderately positive attitudes toward opportunities for positive personal growth. Location of the college was indicated most often as the primary reason for attending.

The two personal characteristics found to be significantly related to positive attitudes toward the college at the .05 level were (1) year attended, and (2) transfer student from another college.

Table of Contents

		Page
	Abstract	III
	List of Tables	V
I.	NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY	1
	Introduction.	1
	Statement of the Problem	1
	Hypothesis	2
II.	METHODS AND PROCEDURES	
	Subjects of the Study	3
	Data Gathering Instrument	3
	Procedures	3
	Analysis of the Data	4
III.	ANALYSIS OF DATA	5
	Attitudes of the Alumni Toward the Philosophy and Purposes of the College	5
	Attitudes of the Alumni Toward the Opportunities Provided by the College for Positive Personal Growth	7
	Attitudes of the Alumni Toward the College Faculty, Curriculum, and Student Activities	9
	The Primary Reason for Attending the College	9
	Summary of Attitudes of the Alumni Toward Selected Aspects of the College	12
	Selected Personal Characteristics of the Alumni Related to Positive Attitudes Toward the College	13
	Results of Analysis Variance.	13
	Summary of Selected Personal Characteristics of the Alumni Related to Positive Attitudes Toward the College	16
IV.	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.	19
	Summary	19
	Conclusion	20
	Appendices	21

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Attitudes of the Alumni Toward the Philosophy/Purposes of the College	6
2	Attitudes of the Alumni Toward the Opportunities Provided by the College for Positive Personal Growth.	8
3	Attitudes of the Alumni Toward the College, Faculty, Curriculum, and Student Activities	10
4	Primary Reasons Indicated by the Alumni for Attending the College	11
5	Personal Characteristics of the Alumni Related to Positive Attitudes Toward the Philosophy/Purposes of the College	14
6	Personal Characteristics of the Alumni Related to Positive Attitudes Toward the Influence of the College in Developing Positive Personal Growth	15
7	Personal Characteristics of the Alumni Related to Positive Attitudes Toward the College Faculty, Curriculum, and Student Activities.	17

NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The Junior colleges have occupied a unique position in higher education as they have continued to operate as "open door" institutions. This has been a long standing role for the Junior College and is one which will no doubt continue into the forseeable future. As the Junior colleges continue to fulfill their committment to a very broad range of abilities and interests exhibited by their clientele, so must their efforts to continue and improve teaching/learning strategies on the campus.

As part of a self evaluation process it was deemed important to determine the attitudes of the alumni toward selected aspects of the college. What are the attitudes of the alumni toward the philosophy and the purposes of this institution? How do the alumni feel toward the opportunities on the campus for personal growth and development? What are their attitudes toward the college faculty, the college curriculum, the student government association and other student activities? What are the primary reasons indicated by the alumni for attending this private Junior college? What are the characteristics of the alumni which are associated with positive attitudes toward the college.

Statement of the Problem

This study was designed to determine the attitudes of the alumni toward selected aspects of a private Junior College.

Specifically, the five objectives of this study were as follows:

(1) To determine the attitudes of the alumni toward the philosophy and purposes of the college

(2) To determine the attitudes of the alumni toward the opportunities provided by the college for positive personal growth

(3) To determine the attitudes of the alumni toward the college faculty, curriculum, and student activities

(4) To determine the primary reasons indicated by the alumni for attending the college

(5) To determine which of the selected personal characteristics were associated with positive attitudes toward the college

Hypothesis

The following research questions were the primary focus of this study.

(1) What are the attitudes of the alumni toward the philosophy and purposes of this college?

(2) What are the attitudes of the alumni toward the opportunities provided by the college for positive personal growth?

(3) What are the attitudes of the alumni toward the college faculty, curriculum, and student activities?

(4) What are the primary reasons indicated by the alumni for attending the college?

(5) What are the selected personal characteristics of the alumni associated with positive attitudes toward the college?

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Subjects of the Study

The setting for this study was a private liberal arts Junior College which was located in North Mississippi and the subjects were alumni of this institution. Attendance covered a 75 year span; from 1912 to the present. Usable questionnaires were returned by 232 individuals.

Data Gathering Instrument

Data for this study were gathered through the use of a questionnaire which was designed specifically for that purpose. The instrument was distributed to the alumni and returned to the college by mail. All respondents were requested to indicate their attitudes toward (1) the philosophy and purposes of the institution, (2) opportunities provided by the college for positive personal growth, (3) the faculty, curriculum, student government association and other student activities, and (4) to indicate the major reasons for attending the college, and (5) to indicate data regarding selected personal characteristics.

Procedures

The college alumni questionnaire were distributed and returned by mail. Of the questionnaires distributed to alumni of the college, a total of 232 were returned in usable condition.

Analysis of Data

A cumulative frequency of responses was used to determine the attitudes of all alumni toward the college and to indicate their primary reasons for attending it. The strongly agree/agree responses were tabulated and treated as positive responses. The undecided responses were treated as neutral. The disagree/strongly disagree responses were tabulated and treated as negative responses. The analysis of variance model was used to determine which of the selected personal characteristics of the alumni were associated with positive attitudes toward the college.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

This study, which was designed to determine the attitudes of the alumni toward the college, their primary reasons for attending the colleges, and personal characteristics associated with positive attitudes toward the college, was grouped around five hypothesis. The data were analyzed and interpreted in terms of those five research questions.

Attitudes of the Alumni Toward the Philosophy and Purposes Of the College

The first research question focused on the attitudes of the alumni toward the philosophy and purposes of the college. As shown in Table 1 the respondents indicated positive attitudes toward the philosophy and purposes of the college. The strongly agree/agree responses ranged from 83.2% to 62.1%. The purpose which was most highly approved by the respondents was the college committment to spiritual values. This statement was supported by 83.2% of the respondents. Reflects spiritual values was approved by 81.5% of the alumni who strongly agree/agree with this purpose.

The undecided responses ranged from a high of 23.7% for training for my occupational goals to a low of 10.3% for a commitment to spiritual values.

As shown in Table 1, the responses of disagree/strongly disagree ranged from a high of 3.9% for training for my occupational goals to a low of 0.9% for the positive influence of the spiritual program and environment of the college.

Table 1

Attitudes of the Alumni Toward the
Philosophy/Purposes of the College

Criterion	Strongly agree/ agree %	Undecided %	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree %
Training for my occupational goals	66.8	23.7	3.9
Citizenship	76.7	16.8	1.3
Commitment to spiritual values	83.2	10.3	2.2
Reflects spiritual values	81.5	11.2	1.7
Stimulating intellectual climate	71.6	19.4	2.2
Positive influence of educational program	79.7	11.6	1.3
Positive influence/ social program	71.6	15.5	2.2
Positive influence/ spiritual program	71.1	16.4	0.9
Select this college again	78.4	10.8	3.0
Program comparable to other colleges	74.6	14.2	2.6
Effective instruction	77.2	12.9	2.2
Adequate course variety	74.1	16.4	1.3
Competent faculty	73.3	16.4	1.3

In summary, as shown in Table 1, the respondents indicated positive attitudes toward the philosophy/purposes of the college. The strongly agree/agree responses were from 83.2% to 62.1%. The undecided responses ranged from 23.7% to 10.3%. The disagree/strongly disagree responses were from a high of 3.9% to a low of 0.9%.

Attitudes of the Alumni Toward the Opportunities Provided by the College for Positive Personal Growth

The second research question was concerned with the attitudes of the alumni toward the opportunities provided by the college for positive personal growth. As shown in table 2, the alumni exhibited moderately favorable attitudes toward the influence of the college educational experiences in promoting positive personal growth. The strongly agree/agree responses ranged from a high of 48.3% for working independently to a low of 15.5% for understanding consumer issues.

The highest undecided response, 48.7% dealt with becoming a more informed citizen. The lowest undecided response 33.2% related to working independently.

The percentage of respondents who disagree/strongly disagree ranged from a high of 26.7% for understanding comsumer issues to a low of 5.2% for persistence.

In summary, as shown in Table 2, the attitudes of the respondents were moderately favorable toward the influence of the educational experience of the college in promoting positive personal growth. Working independently received the highest percentage of strongly agree/agree responses. Becoming a more informed citizen received the highest undecided response. Understanding consumer issues received the highest disagree/strongly disagree response of 26.7%.

Table 2

Attitudes of the Alumni Toward the Opportunities Provided by the College for Positive Personal Growth

Criterion	Strongly agree/ Agree %	Undecided %	Disagree/ Strongly disagree %
Becoming a better Christian	10.1	42.7	6.5
Becoming a more informed citizen	34.1	48.7	9.1
Caring for personal mental/ physical health	34.9	46.1	8.6
Following directions effectively	33.2	47.4	7,8
Leading/guiding others	36.2	42.7	11.2
Independent Learning	46.1	37.5	6.5
Financial management	31.5	36.2	16.8
Effective time organization	34.5	43.1	10.8
Persistence	35.8	45.3	5.2
Finishing projects	36.6	43.1	7.3
Speaking effectively	34.5	38.8	12.5
Understanding consumer issues	15.5	42.7	26.7
Understanding written information	31.9	44.4	9.9
Independent thought	41.8	38.8	6.9
Working cooperatively	41.8	37.5	7.8
Working independently	48.3	33.2	6.0
Writing effectively	33.2	40.5	13.4

Attitudes of the Alumni Toward the College Faculty, Curriculum, and Student Activities

The third research question was concerned with the attitudes of the alumni toward the college faculty, curriculum, and student activities. As shown in Table 3, the respondents rated the faculty, curriculum, and student activities in a positive manner. The highest strongly agree/agree response was 71.7% for quality of the faculty and the lowest of 47.0% was for the variety of cultural and entertainment programs provided for the student body.

The highest undecided response was 30.2% for the community meeting. The lowest undecided response was 9.9% for the modular calendar.

As shown in Table 3, the highest disagree/strongly disagree rating of 4.4% was for the effectiveness of the assembly/community programs. The lowest disagree/strongly disagree rating of .8% was for the accessibility of the faculty.

In summary, as shown in Table 3, the attitudes of the respondents toward the faculty, curriculum, and student activities were positive. The most positive response of strongly agree/agree was for the quality of the faculty. The highest undecided response of 30.2% was for the community meeting. The highest disagree/strongly disagree rating of 4.4% was for the effectiveness of the assembly/community programs.

The Primary Reason for Attending the College

The fourth research question focused on the primary reason indicated by the alumni for attending the college. As shown in Table 4, the alumni

Table 3

Attitudes of the Alumni Toward the College Faculty, Curriculum, and Student Activities

Criterion	Strongly Agree/ Agree %	Undecided %	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree %
SGA provided strong leadership	49.1	25.4	3.9
Christian life commission promoted spiritual atmosphere	58.2	17.7	3.4
Effectiveness of recreation commission	50.4	22.4	4.7
Effectiveness of informal education commission/cultural events	47.0	22.0	4.3
Effectiveness of building & grounds commission	57.3	17.2	3.0
advising system	56.5	22.4	3.9
Staff	65.5	16.8	1.7
Campus atmosphere	69.8	12.1	2.6
Concern for individual	70.7	10.8	3.0
Community meeting	48.3	30.2	2.6
Counseling system	49.1	27.2	3.4
Course scheduling	63.4	17.7	3.9
Program flexibility	61.6	18.5	1.3
Registration procedure	65.9	12.5	2.6
Quality of faculty	71.1	10.8	1.7
Modular calendar	46.6	9.9	3.4
Involvement in campus events	64.2	15.9	0.9
Student work opportunities	58.6	15.5	2.6
Accessibility of faculty	68.1	15.9	0.8
Preparation/occupation	68.5	14.2	1.7

Table 4

Primary Reasons Indicated by the Alumni For Attending the College by Rank Order

Criterion	Rank Order
Location	1
Work while attending	2
Low cost of attending	3
Scholarships/Financial Aid	4
Smaller Classes	5
Friends attended	6
Academic reputation	7
Social atmosphere	8
Parents	9
Alumni/minister	10
Courses offered	11
Chance of success	12
High School Advisor	13

most often listed location of the college as the primary reason for attending. The opportunity to work while attending was ranked second, low cost of attending was third, and scholarships, financial aid was ranked fourth. Smaller classes was ranked as fifth, friends attended as sixth, academic reputation was seventh, and social atmosphere as eighth. Ninth was parents, tenth was alumni/minister, courses offered was eleventh, chance of success was twelth, and thirteenth was high school advisor.

Summary of Attitudes of the Alumni Toward the Selected Aspects of the College

As a group, the alumni exhibited favorable attitudes toward the college. The respondents exhibited positive attitudes toward the philosophy and purposes of the college. They also demonstrated moderately favorable attitudes toward the opportunities provided by the college for the development of positive personal attributes. Positive attitudes were shown toward the faculty, curriculum, student government and student activities. Location was cited most frequently as the primary reason for attending the college.

Selected Personal Characteristics of the Alumni Related to Positive Attitudes Toward the College

In order to more specifically describe the attitudes of the alumni toward the college, certain personal characteristics were selected for study. The data which related to personal characteristics and attitudes toward the college were treated with the analysis of variance statistical model.

Results of Analysis of Variance

The fifth hypothesis was concerned with determining the relationship of selected personal characteristics with positive attitudes toward the college. Attitudes toward the college were divided into three parts: (1) philosophy/purposes, (2) opportunities for positive personal growth, and (3) faculty, curriculum and student activities.

In Table 5, the F ratio for selected personal characteristics of the alumni and attitudes toward the philosophy/purposes of the college are shown. The F ratio for year attended was 52.72. Therefore, it was determined that there was a significant relationship between the year attended and positive attitudes toward the philosophy/purposes of the college at the .05 level.

In Table 5, the F ratio for transfer student from another college was 4.72. Therefore it was determined that there was a significant relationship between a transfer student from another college and positive attitudes toward the philosophy/purposes of the college at the .05 level.

As shown in Table 5, there was an F ratio of 3.58 for graduate of this institution, and F ratio of 1.49 for transferred to another college, an F ratio of 1.20 for day or dorm student, an F ratio for effect of this

college on occupational choice. Therefore, it was determined that there was no significant relationship between these characteristics and positive attitudes toward the philosophy/purposes of the college at the .05 level.

Table 5

Personal Characteristics of the Alumni Related to Positive Attitudes Toward the Philosophy/Purposes of the College

Criterion	F Ratio
Year attended	52.72*
Transfer student from another college	4.72*
Graduate of this institution	3.58
Transfer to another college	1.49
Day or Dorm student	1.20
Effect of this college on occupational choices	.20

Significant at .05 level*

In table 6, the F ratio for selected personal characteristics and attitudes toward opportunities for positive personal growth are shown. The F ratio for year attended and opportunities for positive personal growth was 10.57. Therefore, it was determined that there was a significant relationship between year attended and opportunities for positive personal growth at the .05 level.

As shown in Table 6, the F ratio for transfer student from another college was 5.91. Therefore, it was determined that there was a significant

Table 6

Personal Characteristics of the Alumni
Related to Positive Attitudes Toward the Influence of the
College in Developing Positive Personal Growth

Criterion	F Ratio
Year attended	10.57*
Transfer student from another college	5.91*
Graduate of this institution	.86
Transferred to another college	.58
Day or Dorm student	.89
Effect of college on occupational choices	.34

Significant at .05 level*

relationship between this personal characteristic and positive attitudes toward opportunities for personal growth at the .05 level.

As shown in Table 6, there was an F ratio of .86 for graduate of this institution, an F ratio of .58 for transferred to another college, an F ratio of .89 for day or dorm student, and an F ratio of .34 for effect of college on occupational choice. Therefore, it was determined that there was no significant relationship between these characteristics and positive attitides toward opportunities for positive personal growth at the .05 level.

In Table 7, the F ratio for selected personal characteristics and positive attitudes toward the college faculty, curriculum, and student activities are shown. The F ratio for year attended was 46.65. Therefore, it was determined that there was a significant relationship between the year attended and positive attitudes toward the faculty, curriculum, and student activities at the .05 level.

As shown in Table 7, the F ratio for transfer student from another college was 3.50, for graduate of this institution an F ratio of 1.40, an F ratio of 1.91 for transferred from another college, an F ratio of .28 for day or dorm student, and an F ratio of .25 for effect of college on occupational choice. Therefore, it was determined that there was no significant relationship between these characteristics and positive attitudes toward the college faculty, curriculum, and student activities.

Summary of Selected Personal Characteristics of the Alumni Related to Positive Attitudes Toward the College

In summary, two of the selected personal characteristics were found to be significantly related to positive attitudes toward the college. A significant relationship was found between the year attended and positive

Table 7

Personal Characteristics of the Alumni Related to Positive Attitudes Toward the College Faculty, Curriculum, and Student Activities

Criterion	F Ratio
Year attended	46.65*
Transfer student from another college	3.50
Graduate of this institution	1.40
Transferred to another college	1.91
Day or Dorm student	.28
Effect of college on occupational choice	.25

Significant at .05 level*

attitudes toward the (1) philosophy/purposes, (2) opportunities for personal growth, and (3) faculty, curriculum, and student activities at the .05 level.

A significant relationship was also found between transfer student from another college and positive attitudes toward (1) philosophy/purposes, and (2) opportunities for positive personal growth at the .05 level. No significant relationship was found to exist between this characteristic and positive attitudes toward the faculty/curriculum, and student activities at the .05 level.

In addition, a significant relationship was not found to exist between the personal characteristics of graduate of this college, transferred to another college, day or dorm student, and influence of this college on occupational choice and positive attitudes toward the (1) philosophy and purposes, (2) opportunities for personal growth, and (3) college faculty, curriculum, and student activities.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes of the alumni toward selected aspects of a private Junior College. The five specific objectives of this study were as follows:

(1) To determine the attitudes of the alumni toward the philosophy purposes of the college.

(2) To determine the attitudes of the alumni toward the opportunities provided by the college for positive personal growth.

(3) To determine the attitudes of the alumni toward the college faculty, curriculum, and student activities.

(4) To determine the primary reasons for attending the college.

(5) To determine which of the selected personal characteristics were associated with positive attitudes toward the college.

The subjects for this study were the alumni of a private Junior College in North Mississippi. The data were gathered through the use of a questionnaire. The instrument was developed specifically for this purpose. Of the questionnaires distributed, a total of 232 were returned in usable condition.

The data were treated through the use of two models. A cumulation frequency of responses was used to determine the attitudes of the alumni toward the college and to determine their primary reason for attending it. The analysis variance model was used to determine the personal characterisics associated with positive attitudes toward the college.

The respondents indicated positive attitudes toward (1) the philosophy and purposes of the college and (2) the faculty, curriculum, and student activities. They indicated moderately positive attitudes toward (3) opportunities for positive personal growth. Location of the college was indicated most often as the reason for attending this institution.

The two personal characteristics found to be positively related to positive attitudes toward the college at the .05 level were (1) year attended, and (2) transfer student from another college.

Conclusion

These data appear to support the hypothesis that the alumni exhibited positive attitudes toward (1) the philosophy and purposes of the college, and (2) the faculty, curriculum, and student activities. Moderately favorable attitudes were indicated toward opportunities provided by the college for positive personal growth.

The primary reason indicated by the alumni for attending the college was its location. A significant relationship was found between (1) year attended, and (2) transfer student from another college and positive attitudes toward the college.

It seems noteworthy to mention that 78.4 percent of the alumni indicated that they would choose this college to attend, if they could "do it all over again."

Appendix A

Selected Personal Characteristics
of Sample

Criterion	%
Year Attended	
1965 and before	50.9
1966 and after	49.1
Transfer student from another college	
Yes	12.5
No	84.9
Graduate from this college	
Yes	63.4
No	34.1
Transferred to another college	
Yes	72.8
No	27.8
Day or dorm student	
Day	39.7
Dorm	53.4
Did the college effect your occupational choice	
Yes	33.6
No	53.0

Percentages may not total 100 because of omitted responses.

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